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JAMESTOWN ARCHEOLOGY





United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
POST OFFICE BOX 210
YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA 23690

Dear Teachers and Students,

Welcome! We are glad that you are planning a visit to historic Jamestown Island. Today, the island is preserved by the National Park Service and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. It is the site of the first permanent English settlement in North America. Most of our language, laws, and customs come from the English people. We hope you will gain a better understanding about the daily lives of these people through your participation in the Jamestown archeological program.

This program is designed so that you may share in the process of deciphering information based upon bits and pieces of Jamestown's history which have laid buried beneath the ground for many years. Through the use of historical records and archeological insight, you should learn more about these seventeenth century settlers and their differences from and similarities to twentieth century people.

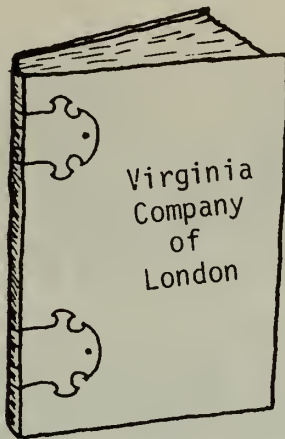
In order to prepare for this experience, please read and become involved in the following exercises in this study booklet. By the use of deductive reasoning you should be able to figure out the answers to most of the questions. Some answers will have to wait until your arrival! Think of yourself as an archeologist trying to discover the nature of a particular site and the life-style of its former occupants. You may find more questions than answers. Maybe you will discover an answer if you imagine yourself to be living in the seventeenth century.

We look forward to your visit and hope you have fun.

Sincerely,

National Park Service Staff
Colonial National Historical Park
Jamestown Island

IMPORTANT! Please be sure to bring this booklet with you when you arrive for your visit.



HISTORICAL ARCHEOLOGY

How it Uncovered Jamestown's History

People come to Jamestown to learn about the history of this 1500 acre island, and with good reason. Jamestown, founded on May 13, 1607, is famous for a series of "first" accomplishments. It is the site of the first permanent English settlement in the New World; it served as the first capital of Virginia for 92 years; and representative legislative government met here for the first time in the English Colonies in July, 1619.

How do we know all this? We read the writings and records of people who lived at Jamestown, ordinary people like you and me. Each of us is recorded at least twice in our lives, when we are born and when we die. Church records document when we marry and court records document land purchases or civil suits. Today these records may be kept in a computer, but in earlier years record books were stored at a state capitol or county courthouse, buildings that could catch fire. Jamestown burned four times and valuable records were destroyed. Fortunately, many diaries and journals of some of the early settlers were published in England as well as the official records of the Virginia Company of London, the sponsoring group of businessmen that financed the Jamestown settlement. These provide us with vivid accounts about Jamestown's early years.

There is another important storage vault of historical information. Consider what lies buried beneath the ground at Jamestown. Jamestown's history can be illustrated by its ARTIFACTS, objects that are manmade or utilized by man. The collection and study of artifacts is commonly known as ARCHEOLOGY. Written history and archeology complement each other to tell a story of events and people. During 92 years as Virginia's capital, quite a bit happened in the Colony. Think of what 92 years mean to us in the 20th century. Even with the development of automobiles, radio, television, and flight, would people in 1900 ever have imagined a man walking on the moon in 1969? Jamestown's history is rich and varied, perhaps not in great technological advances, but in the development of social, economic, and political institutions which have shaped our history into the 20th century.

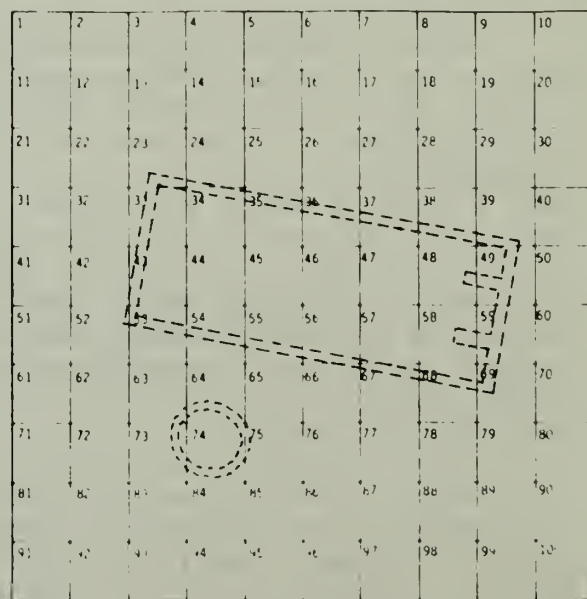
After the capital was relocated in 1699 to Middle Plantation, renamed Williamsburg, what happened to Jamestown? The island became the site of large plantations, owned by the Ambler and Travis families in the 18th century. In the late 19th century the Barney family who owned the island donated part of Jamestown to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. The preservation of Jamestown was about to begin.

Because of severe erosion problems from the James River, a sea wall was constructed along the island by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1901. The engineer in charge of the project discovered foundations, skeletons, and other 17th century objects while constructing the sea wall. At the same time, the A.P.V.A. was investigating the foundations of the 1639 church and its tower, the only 17th century structure still standing above ground on the island. The foundations of this church became the basis for a memorial church, built to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown in 1907. Naturally, people became very interested in the foundations and other artifacts or "relics" found under the ground.

In 1934, the National Park Service acquired most of Jamestown Island and combined it with the Yorktown battlefield to form Colonial National Historical Park. Consider the irony that Jamestown and Yorktown are only 23 miles apart and mark the beginning and end of British rule in America.

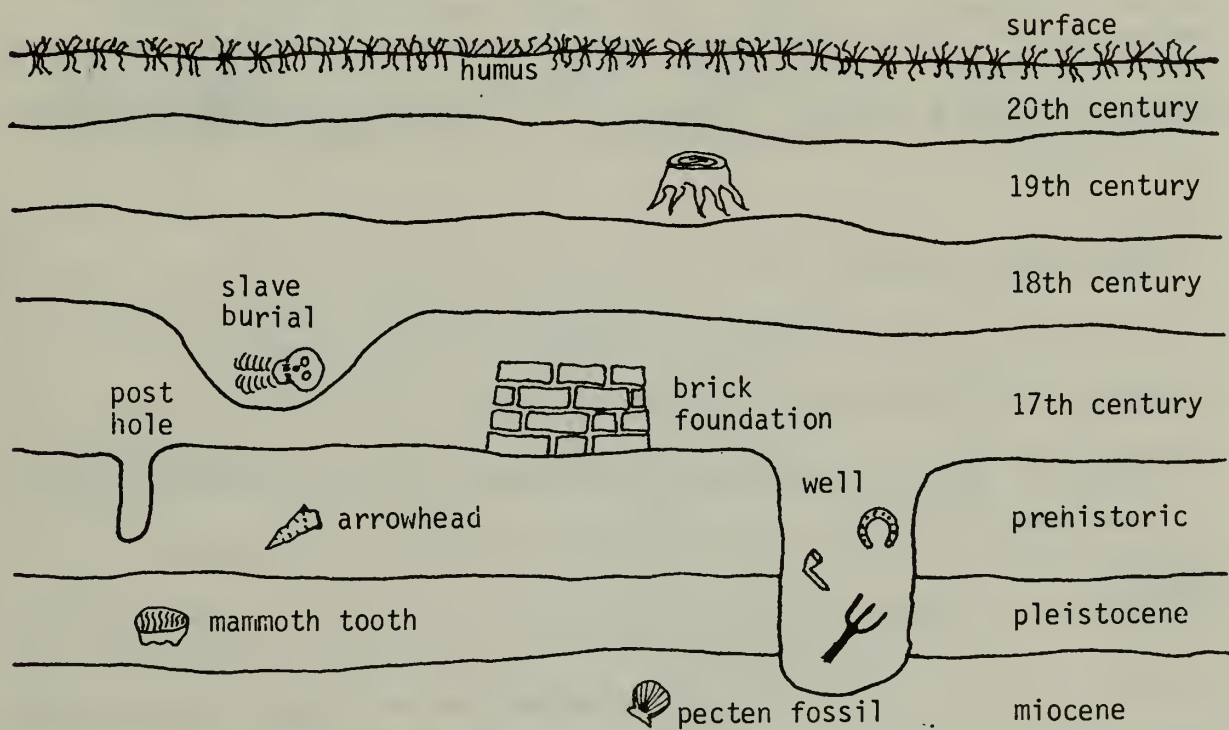
J.C. Harrington became the principal archeological investigator at Jamestown in 1936. He invented and applied new techniques for excavating historical archeological sites. Mr. Harrington was interested in everything which the colonists had left behind: foundations of buildings, material culture, or anything else which could piece together a more complete picture of their daily lives. Interrupted by World War II, excavations started again in the 1950's under the direction of Dr. John Cotter. One of the archeological projects was to locate the first fort site, using underwater techniques, and an excavation under the Confederate Battery. Stationed in the river on a barge, off-shore from the Confederate Battery site, they dropped a clam bucket into the river 65 times. They found lots of mud and scattered 17th century objects, but no clear evidence of the location of the fort site.

During the 1930's and 1950's, other more sophisticated techniques were used to locate artifacts. Mr. Harrington and later Dr. Cotter utilized the GRID SYSTEM to plot the precise location of artifacts as they were being uncovered in the ground. This system requires that the site be divided into a checker-board of squares (10 ft. x 10 ft.) so that the dig can be done in a carefully controlled manner. Workers have specific areas of responsibilities and records can be kept accurately.



In addition to the GRID SYSTEM, the Law of STRATIGRAPHY is used by archeologists as a method to date objects found under the ground. As archeologists dig down through cross-sections of earth, they find that the layers of soil portray history in a time line. The soil closest to the surface represents the most recent time period. Each succeeding layer will then go back further in time. The deeper the archeologists dig, the earlier are the layers of history which are uncovered.

Because of the work of Mr. Harrington, Dr. Cotter and many others, countless artifacts were discovered at Jamestown. Today, Colonial National Historical Park houses one of the richest and most complex collections of objects representing 17th century material culture in Colonial America.



Because all cultures leave trash, it is important to study these discarded items and try to discover how they were made, what purpose they served and most importantly what these items tell us about the culture of the people who used them. Your first exercise in the world of archeology is to do an artifact study right in your home area. Become a backyard archeologist and discover information about your own lifestyle and culture.



BACKYARD ARCHEOLOGY

Pre-visit activity

When you come to historic Jamestown, you will participate in an artifact study where you will examine some 17th century artifacts excavated at Jamestown. The following exercise will help prepare you for your visit.

Items around us today may provide an archeologist of the future with information about our lifestyle. What would they learn about our 20th century culture? Select an object that you own for an "artifact" of tomorrow, for example; a pair of blue jeans, a magazine, a record, a radio, a video game, or perhaps a soda can. What part of the item may deteriorate through the ages? Use the following study guide to explain the significance of your "artifact".

History

1) Where was it made? _____

2) When was it made? _____

3) Who made it? _____

4) Who owned it? _____

Material

5) What is it made of? _____

Construction

6) How was it made? _____

Design

7) What style is it? _____

8) Describe the object. _____

Function

9) What was it used for? _____

Identification

10) What is it? _____

11) How many different uses might this item have? _____

Evaluation

12) What is the level of craftsmanship? _____

Cultural Analysis

13) What is the relationship of the artifact with its contemporary culture? _____

14) Who would have used this artifact? _____

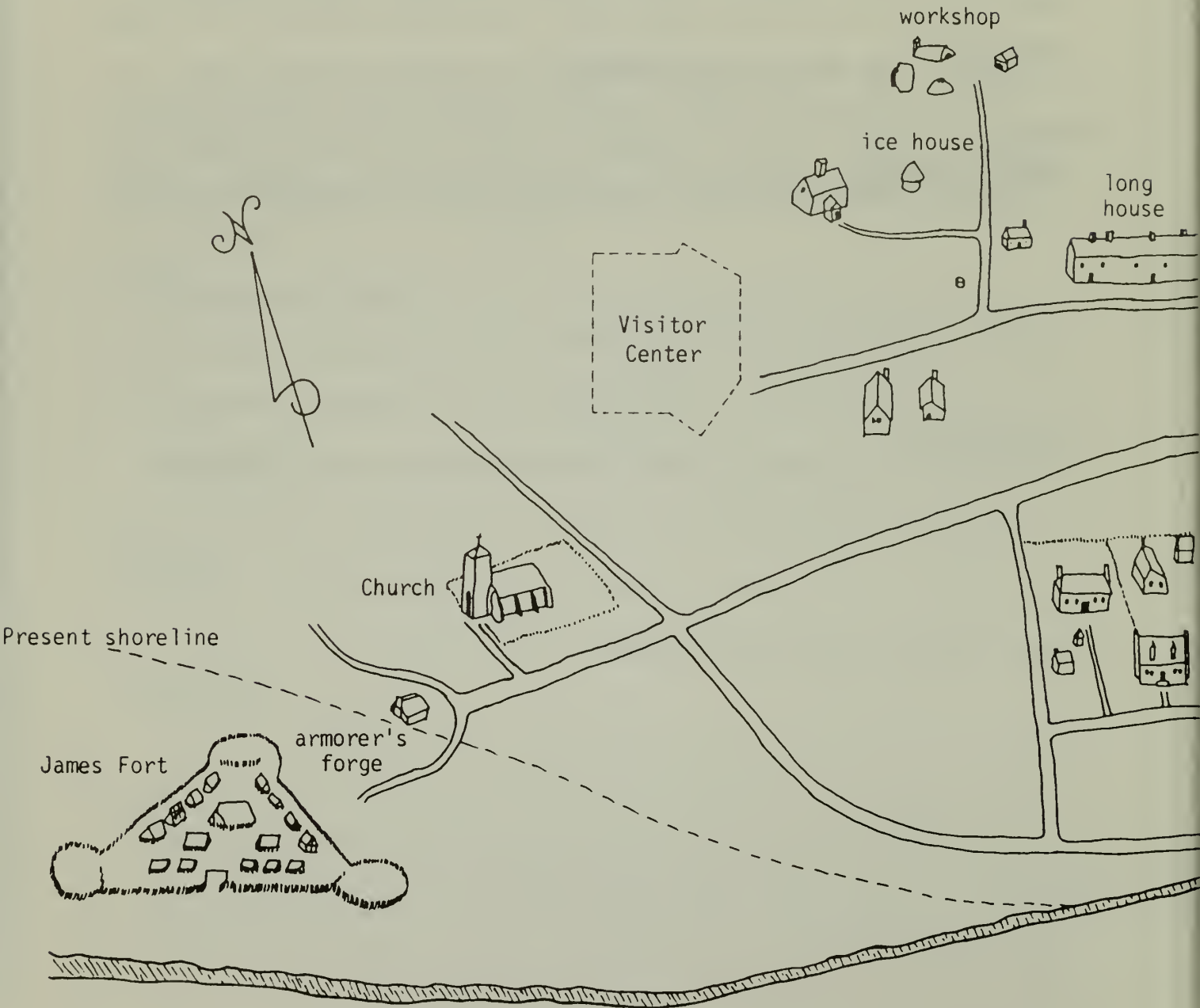
Interpretation

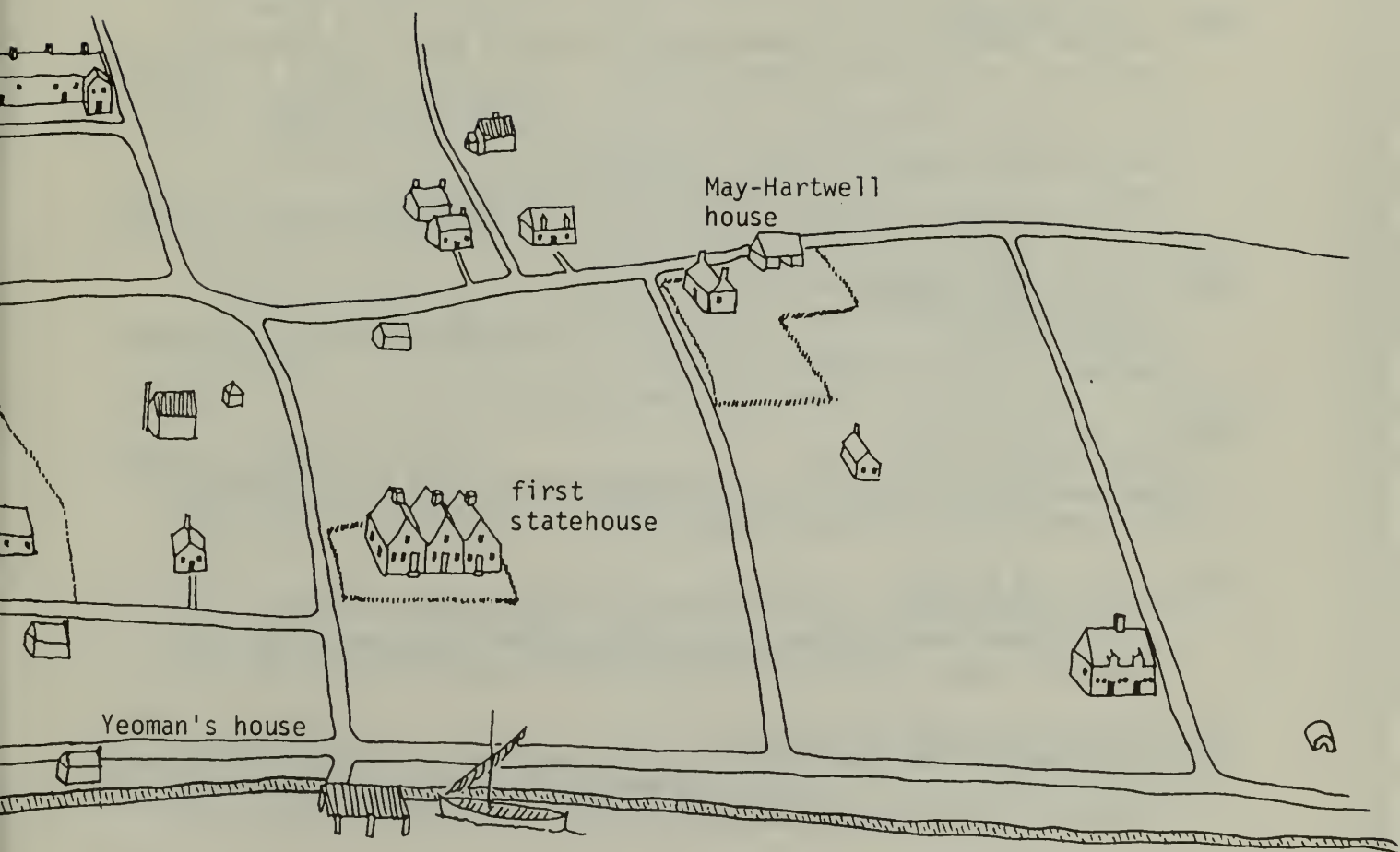
15) How does the artifact express the lifestyle of its age or culture? _____

Make a sketch of your artifact below.

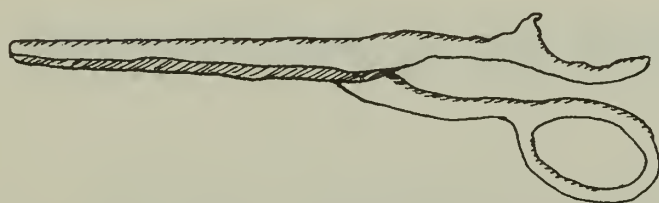
JAMESTOWN in the 1600's

This map is a representation of what Jamestown might have looked like based on archeological evidence. You are invited to walk these ancient streets and imagine yourself living here in the 17th century.





James River



JAMESTOWN MUSEUM STUDY GUIDE

On-site Visit Activity

On display in the artifact museum you will find items excavated at historic Jamestown. Within the museum each case is numbered at the top. By following the cases in numerical sequence you will discover Jamestown's story in chronological order. You may borrow, upon request, a museum guide book to aid you further. As you travel through the museum, fill in the blanks in the questions below. Enjoy yourself as you venture back into the seventeenth century and into the world of the Jamestown colonists.

Case 1 The Old World

This sea chest served a dual purpose; to carry one's belongings, and since not many colonists owned chairs, it could also double as a piece of _____,

These three items; _____, _____, and _____ are believed to belong to _____, daughter of Chief Powhatan and wife of John Rolfe.

Case 2 Military Equipment

A modern day soldier would not be without his gun and this three-quarter suit of _____ was also a necessity for the 17th century soldier.

Case 3 The Three Ships

Three English ships; the _____, _____, and the _____, brought 144 Englishmen to Jamestown. How many men would remain on the island? _____

Case 4 The Old Rivalry

The European rivalry between Protestant England and Catholic _____ spilled over into the American continent after vast wealth was discovered in South and Central America in the 16th century.

Case 5 Relations with the Indians

The iron discs and Jew's harps in this case are evidence of the extensive _____ or bartering that was carried on between the English colonists and the Native American Indians.

Case 6 The Tidewater Indians

This Indian mortar and pestle was used as a grinding tool to make _____ into meal for bread.

Case 7 The James Fort

This makeshift, three-sided fort was built to protect the colonists against the real or imaginary threats of the _____ and the _____.

Since the fort was made of straw, wood, mud, and other highly flammable materials it succumbed to several _____.

Case 8 and 9 The Colonist's Home

The _____ or _____ was the center of activity in the home as the wife cooked the family meals over the warm fire.

Judging from the feather mattress, leather and wood armchair, and hand-painted tiles one can deduce that this was a fairly _____ family.

Case 10 Pile Driver

This 1300 pound pile driver used in building wharves and docks indicates that the many _____ of the tidewater area served as the major avenues of transportation in colonial days.

Case 11 Animals in the Colony

The curry comb, spurs, and bridle bits tell us that _____ were another form of transportation in the colony.

Case 12 Food Preparation

The personalized seals on these imported wine bottles probably belonged to the _____ class who owned much of Virginia's land.

Case 13 Health and Religion

The many _____ found at Jamestown are grim reminders of the high death rate during the early years of the frontier settlement.

Case 14 Shaping the Land

Since gold was never found and wine and silk-making proved unsuccessful, the colonists turned to _____ as the main money crop in Virginia.

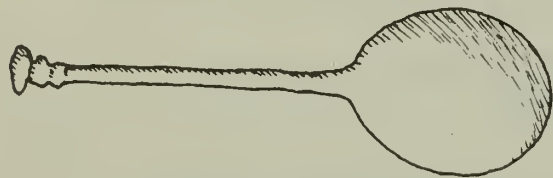
The saw, hoe, wedge, hatchet, and hammer were used by the _____ and _____ who worked in the tobacco fields and made up most of Virginia's labor force.

Case 15 Shelter

Although the first Jamestown homes were crudely made of mud and straw, eventually fine homes of hand-made _____ were fashioned from local materials of lime, clay, and sand.

Case 16 Property in the Colony

Skilled artisans such as _____ who made this decorated andiron and _____ who used this crucible that held molten glass were needed to make the colony successful.





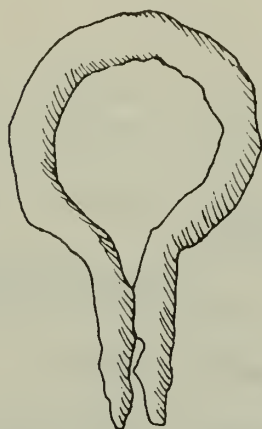
ARCHEOLOGY MATCHING GAME

Post-visit Activity

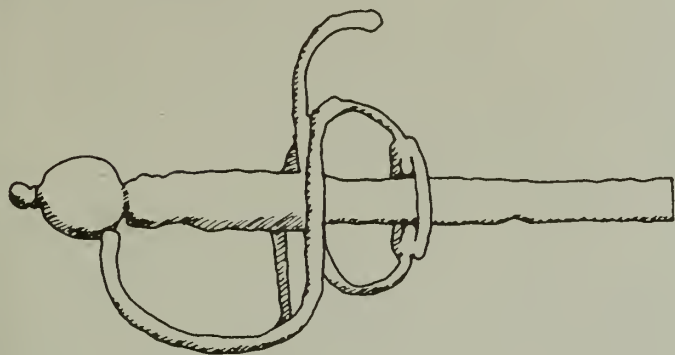
Now that you have visited historic Jamestown, test your knowledge as an archeologist. Match the terms below to the correct description on the following page.

- A. curator
- B. archeologist
- C. trowel
- D. historical archeology
- E. pewter
- F. sgraffito slipware
- G. artifact
- H. museum
- I. delftware
- J. humus
- K. Venetian glass
- L. earthenware
- M. excavation
- N. National Park Service
- O. stratigraphy

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- _____ 1. Government agency dedicated to preserving this nation's natural and historical resources.
 - _____ 2. Decorative English type of pottery which uses a scratched design.
 - _____ 3. Ornamental glassware similar to the kind made in Venice.
 - _____ 4. A Dutch or English type of pottery with opaque-white glaze and blue hand-painted decorations.
 - _____ 5. A person responsible for identification and maintenance of museum collections.
 - _____ 6. A place where artworks, artifacts, and valuable objects are displayed.
 - _____ 7. Any object made or utilized by man.
 - _____ 8. A system used by an archeologist to date objects found under the earth.
 - _____ 9. A person who excavates a site and interprets the artifacts found.
 - _____ 10. A tool with a flat, triangular-shaped blade used by archeologists and masons.
 - _____ 11. The process of digging out the earth as in an archeological dig.
 - _____ 12. The scientific study of the past using historical documents as well as physical remains and artifacts.
 - _____ 13. An all-purpose type of coarse pottery which in the 17th century was usually glazed on the inside only.
 - _____ 14. An inexpensive metal made of tin and lead used for making spoons, plates, and knives.
 - _____ 15. The dark, organic material in the soil.
-



NOTES



BIBLIOGRAPHY

To read further on archeology and Jamestown's history, you may wish to find these books at your local library. Those books marked with stars are generally available at the gift shop in the Jamestown Visitor Center.

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JAMESTOWN ARCHEOLOGY

Student Workbook

Colonial National Historical Park
Jamestown Island

